

**COUNCIL POLICY****CURRENT**

SUBJECT: UNDERGROUND CONVERSION OF UTILITY LINES AT DEVELOPER  
EXPENSE  
POLICY NO.: 600-25  
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 20, 1987

**BACKGROUND:**

The Municipal Code stipulates that subdividers of land be required to convert to an underground location all overhead utility facilities within and adjacent to the subdivision. The Code exempts from this requirement all utility facilities in excess of 69kv and subdivisions in agricultural zones or in single-family subdivisions of four lots or less. While the basic requirement for utility conversions is considered to be a public benefit through the improvement of the environment and the enhancement of the quality of life, it is recognized that there are circumstances where a waiver of the undergrounding requirement is appropriate.

**PURPOSE:**

It is the purpose of this policy to establish guidelines which can be used by both the public and staff in determining the appropriateness of the waiver request and the procedures to be followed.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Council to consider granting a waiver, in whole or in part, from the requirement to convert overhead utility facilities when such conversions are determined to be impractical from a technical or financial standpoint or would have minimal aesthetic impact. Each waiver request is to be considered in light of its particular circumstances and may be denied even though it meets one or more of the general guidelines contained herein.

**IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES:**

- A. Requests for underground conversion waivers are to be considered by either the Subdivision Board or Planning Commission concurrently with the approval of the tentative map. Waiver requests submitted after the approval of the tentative map will be considered by the Subdivision Board. Waivers will be approved, conditionally approved or denied, and the decision can be appealed in accordance with provisions specified in the Municipal Code (SEC. 102.0404).
- B. Generally, waivers may be considered favorably if any of the following findings can be made.
  - 1. The conversion involves a short span of overhead facility (less than a full block in length) and it has been determined that such conversion is not a part of a continuing effort to accomplish a total undergrounding within a specific street or area.
  - 2. The facility to be converted is underbuilt on a 69kv or larger facility (which is not to be undergrounded) and does not require a substantial number of poles to support solely the facilities requested to be waived.

3. The conversion would represent an isolated undergrounding with a minimum probability of extension in the future.
  4. The conversion involves a major street already scheduled as a utility company financed project (PUC 8209).
  5. The conversion would involve either a substantial investment in temporary facilities (cable poles, temporary recircuiting, etc.) or involve a significant amount of work considered offsite to the development which is financing the conversion.
  6. The conversion would involve an inordinate cost to the development. Such determination is to be made where practical on the basis of cost estimates supplied or confirmed by the utility companies or a utility consultant and should be considered with regard to the type of development, the aesthetic benefits, and relative costs if the facilities were to remain overhead. Generally, in residential projects, the conversion cost prorated to the entire development should not exceed 1% of the average sales price of the living units within the development.
  7. The conversion is a requirement of a condo conversion permit of an existing development and the conversion would not represent a logical extension to an underground facility.
- C. In instances where waivers are granted and the subdivision is required to improve the street in which a future conversion is scheduled, the developer will be required to place the necessary substructures to accommodate the conversion within the limits of the improvement. Any request to waive this requirement should be accompanied by a statement of support from the appropriate utility companies.

**HISTORY:**

Adopted by Resolution R-219206 08/31/1977  
Amended by Resolution R-253922 03/31/1981  
Amended by Resolution R-268140 04/20/1987